



Capt. Terry Shields (right), commander, Iron Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, provides a status update 13 June 2018 to his higher command utilizing the assistance of his radio transmission operator and the Nett Warrior system in the vicinity of Kaunas, Lithuania. Shields's troop conducted an air assault into the north side of the Neman River to secure the area for bridging operations during a contested wet-gap crossing as part of Saber Strike 18. (Photo by Pfc. James Crowley, U.S. Army)

Reinvesting in Techniques

Col. John A. Gabriel, U.S. Army

During a brigade combat team's (BCT) initial attack to seize a lodgment, a maneuver battalion (BN) is given two specified tasks. Serving as Supporting Effort 1, it is tasked to block in order to secure the BCT main effort's southern flank. On order, it is to seize a key intersection southeast of the blocking position to facilitate freedom of maneuver. Additionally, the BN is instructed to use aircraft as the insertion means.

From completion of the BCT operations order brief, there are approximately eighty-one hours until the air

assault H-hour. Abiding by the one-third/two-thirds rule, the BN has twenty-seven hours to publish a plan, complete the required steps of the air assault planning timeline, and participate in the BCT rehearsal sequence, which begins twenty-four hours after the conclusion of the BCT operations order brief.

During mission analysis, the BN identified eight implied tasks along with its two directed tasks for a total of ten major activities. These included staging the battalion at the aerial port of embarkation, moving to the pickup zone

(PZ), controlling PZ operations, controlling landing zone operations, conducting a movement to contact, establishing battle positions (directed), developing an engagement area, conducting ground assault convoy operations, conducting battalion consolidation, and attacking to seize (directed) and retain terrain.

Acknowledging that it had no off-the-shelf techniques on which to rely, the BN started from scratch. It triaged its list of specified and implied tasks and focused most of its planning time on what it identified as the activities with highest risk to the BCT's success (e.g., the air assault operation). In retrospect, the BN achieved an appropriate level of detail for PZ staging but failed to break through conceptual planning on the other tasks. Recognizing that doing so is difficult under the best of circumstances, a reservoir of actionable techniques on common activities would have helped. The BN could have spent its planning time on the unique aspects of the mission and fallen back on practiced, actionable techniques for the rest. One might also consider that the BCT may have asked too much of its battalion. Regardless, the BN did what it was told to do by its higher headquarters, which was similarly deficient in techniques. The lack of emphasis on techniques is amplified by gaps in Army doctrine. Productive discourse through a variety of means would better fill these gaps.

Techniques, generically defined as bodies of performance methods, are critical to how well an Army fights. Yet they are misunderstood and underappreciated. When actionable (can be put immediately into play without much thinking), techniques set the conditions for the successful employment of units. In 2003, the U.S. Army was arguably tactically sound in large-scale combat operations (LSCO) because it was grounded in refined techniques.¹ Twenty years of calibration to AirLand Battle and Full Spectrum Operations enabled this refinement across tactical echelons. Unfortunately, those techniques are now stale because of the natural regression of being unpracticed and almost disregarded because the current generation of leaders has not yet seen their value. The Army's rightful refocus on LSCO and recent structural changes has ironically amplified this dynamic in a way that requires immediate recalibration.

As field-grade leaders gain sets and repetitions in training for LSCO, there is an operational necessity to mature the scant attention on echelon fundamentals

and techniques to refined and actionable methods. Theory and tactics alone—routinely on full display at combat training centers—are insufficient for the effective employment of combat formations. The Maneuver Center of Excellence's recently established Brigade Fight Course for incoming BCT commanders is an attempt to fill this gap and must be met with increased professional discourse. An Army-wide technique reformation effort would be consistent with the Army chief of staff's core emphasis on warfighting and strengthening the Army profession.

Although the U.S. Army defines and employs the term "technique" in its doctrinal manuals, the quality of techniques are varied and, in most cases, lack the rigor needed for them to be helpful to the operational force. It is the quality of published techniques that is in question. The true sign of a high-quality technique is that it has breached the conceptual and has reached appropriate levels of detail; it is *actionable* to the point of being off-the-shelf useful for commanders and planners in stressful environments. To this point, examples of both conceptual (low-quality) and detailed (high-quality) techniques are presented here. Hereinafter, a technique that is precise in detail to an organization's mission, people, and equipment, and is refined to the point it can save considerable time while planning in combat, is referred to as an actionable technique.

This article sheds light on this enterprise blind spot through the lens of a former Joint Readiness Training Center task force senior observer, coach, trainer. A decrement in the quality of techniques currently available directly impacts the tactical success of brigades and battalions. A fresh perspective on

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how to think about techniques is needed to replace the Army's current conceptual leaning. Techniques that account for, in sequence, a formation's theory of employment, structure of employment (or organization construct), and method of employment provide the precision needed to make a difference on the battlefield. Moreover, this proposed framework shows how actionable techniques require an understanding of a formation's people and equipment, among other influences, as its most important ingredient. Finally, while the article demonstrates the framework in action through

for techniques: "non-prescriptive ways or methods used to perform missions, functions, or tasks."⁵ Again, it should be the realm of techniques that bridges the generalized theory associated with broad categories of formations to the specific formation under observation—from a shallow description of a maneuver battalion to something more specific, like an infantry BCT (IBCT) infantry battalion, to an actual IBCT infantry battalion of 731 soldiers with an attached field support company, 105 prime movers, tactical vehicles of different storage capacity, four tank rack modules, WIN-T increment

“The next level down publication, FM 3-90, *Tactics*, states, 'Units plan fires in series or groups to support maneuver against enemy forces on or near their geographical objectives. Assault elements move rapidly across their objectives as their units shift artillery fires and obscurants from the objectives to other targets.'”

the lens of a BCT infantry battalion, it is not specific to that formation. Rigorous attention to techniques better prepares all units to succeed in close combat now and in a way that is congruent with the development of future concepts.²

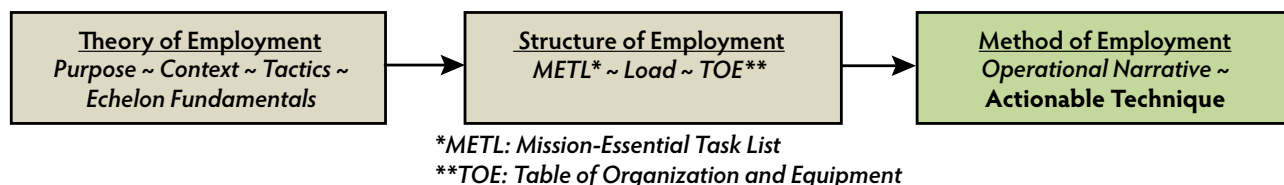
Army Doctrine and Army Techniques Publications

The Army's doctrine authority defines principles, tactics, and techniques, and apportions the data associated with each of these terms to specific echelons of publication. Below is an overview of the interplay of these publications. Understanding this connection is important because it amplifies the lack of distinctiveness in how doctrine presents employment of formations.

An Army doctrine publication (ADP) presents principles, or comprehensive and fundamental rules or an assumption of central importance that guides how an organization approaches and thinks about the conduct of operations.³ A field manual (FM) presents tactics, or the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other.⁴ Army techniques publications (ATP) present Army-sanctioned techniques. The Army currently uses the standard joint definition

2, and a basic load of forty-eight Javelin surface attack FMG-148E missiles.

As an example, the following sequence provides the doctrinal progression of the use of obscurants in the offense. Starting with principles, ADP 3-90, *Offense and Defense*, provides basic concepts and control measures associated with tactics. In reference to the use of obscurants, the ADP states, "Commanders use obscurants to disrupt an enemy force's assault or movement formations and to deny an enemy force's use of target acquisition optics, visual navigation aids, air avenues of approach, landing zones, and drop zones."⁶ The next level down publication, FM 3-90, *Tactics*, states, "Units plan fires in series or groups to support maneuver against enemy forces on or near their geographical objectives. Assault elements move rapidly across their objectives as their units shift artillery fires and obscurants from the objectives to other targets."⁷ Still, the reference to obscurants is generic to all types of maneuver formations. The lowest level publication, ATP 3-21.20, *Infantry Battalion*, only references that mortars can use white phosphorous as an obscurant.⁸ ATP 3-21.90, *Tactical Employment of Mortars*, at its most specific, states that "combat experiences in World



(Figure by author)

Figure. Actionable Technique Framework

War II and Korea have shown that an onboard mix of 70-percent high explosive, 20-percent white phosphorus or smoke, and 10-percent illumination ammunition is the most flexible.⁹ In this example, neither of the two mentioned ATPs provide the detail needed for an infantry battalion (IN BN) to effectively employ its organic obscurants in the offense. The offered technique is too conceptual.

What the leaders of an IBCT IN BN need to know in order to be effective is the detail associated with an IN BN mortar basic load, the minimum duration and size required for an obscuration of a complex obstacle, and the characteristics of packaged mortar rounds by Department of Defense Identification Code (DODIC). A basic load for a mortar platoon organic to an IBCT IN BN does not include smoke; it does, however, include twenty-eight rounds of 120 mm white phosphorous. Depending on the DODIC, twenty-eight rounds of 120 mm white phosphorous only provide a quick smoke mission of five hundred meters for five minutes in ideal meteorological conditions. If a BN needs an eight-minute quick smoke mission to allow for a complex breaching drill, the mortar platoon can provide a reduced two-hundred-meter smoke screen for eight minutes. Any different fires plan requires a unique ammunition request that would necessitate a resupply from the field trains. Increasing the quantity of 120 mm white phosphorous rounds requires a decrease in a different round type within the carried load. Knowing this detail at the field-grade level matters. It is what enables a well-synchronized BCT attack.

With this level of detail, an actionable technique is within reach. A BCT commander can standardize the quantity of rounds by DODIC on hand within maneuver battalions for an attack, and direct that these rounds are preserved for a breach. Even when allocated

a 105 mm smoke target, an IN BN has a backup plan in case the BCT smoke mission is delayed. Because a class V basis load and assigned equipment is different for an IBCT IN BN, an armored BCT combined arms battalion, and a Stryker BCT infantry battalion, each type of formation would employ a different technique.

Actionable Technique Framework: Theory, Structure, Method

The Army needs a new frame of reference for thinking about techniques. The framework above, grounded in organizational theory, may work for the enterprise.

The figure depicts a sequence of concepts flowing from left to right. The left is more generic, while the right is more specific. The three boxes contain a few items commonly understood by military professionals (tactics, table of organization and equipment [TO&E], and mission-essential task list [METL]) and a few concepts that are new (echelon fundamentals and operational narrative). In this framework, sequence and logic flow matter. Theory drives the creation of structure, which then drives the creation of employment method. Creating structure without knowing the unit's intended purpose is dysfunctional as is changing structure without first rethinking a unit's theory of employment. To identify echelon fundamentals, one must understand the desired tactics, which requires a knowledge of context underpinned by the formations purpose of existence. Therefore, for techniques to be detailed enough to have the impact desired in this article, it must account for three influences built upon each other: a formation's theory first, structure second, and then method of employment third.¹⁰

Theory of employment is generic. Theory broadly defines how a specific type of formation interacts with others in mutual support to achieve objectives. It flows

from the Army's overall theory of employment presented in its capstone operational doctrine (which, in the case of FM 3-0, *Operations*, is vague). All echelons and types of a formation are designed, or should be designed, with unique purpose and sometimes differentiating context in mind. Corps headquarters do something different than division, an aviation brigade has a different mission than a sustainment brigade, and an IBCT should excel in restricted terrain while an ABCT should not. Tactics flow next, with depictions of relationships in space and purpose, agnostic to time and capacity. The final point under theory is echelon fundamentals. Although the mastery of fundamentals is mostly associated with individuals, squads, and platoons, there are skills in LSCO that, when not performed by higher headquarters, put mission accomplishment at risk. These fundamentals serve as the connective tissue that ties tactics together. In LSCO, battalions, brigades, and divisions own unique tactical roles with unique fundamentals. A well-defined formation theory of employment feeds formation design.

Structure of employment flows second in the framework and adds the specific tools and expectations to the generic formation. The METL provides the formation's primary operational requirements for which it was manned and equipped. These operational requirements scope the unit's desired capacity in terms of load (the things it carries for action and endurance). Load matters because it affects needed haul capacity, whether rucksack or trailer. Most of a formation's structure is defined by its TO&E. Applying structure to theory is the point that current attempts at techniques avoid.

Method of employment is the final step and adds specificity. Missing from most doctrine is an operational narrative that offers a visualization for how a specific formation does what the Army wants it to do with the tools and people it was given. It connects activities together and explains interactions not typically associated with mission-essential tasks (MET). Actionable techniques are the conclusion in the logic flow. Their creation, practice, and execution help formations solve compounding tactical problems in a time-constrained environment.

Techniques crafted with respect to these influences provide three main benefits to a formation. First, they are precise, apply to all like formations, and require little additional effort to apply. Second, they save time

in planning because the relevant detail is already established. Third, a leader who served her or his entire company-grade time in one specific type of formation could study the techniques relevant to a different type of formation and have an immediate impact on arrival. Techniques reduce planning time, increase common understanding across the formation of their detail, and allow leaders to more quickly calibrate to formations in which they have not previously served.

So, how might this framework apply in practice? The following sequence puts the technique framework into action and depicts the interplay between theory, structure, and method of employment for an IBCT IN BN.

Theory of employment. For the purpose of informing IBCT IN BNs, the TOE considered in this analysis is the K-series, Infantry Battalion (IBCT) 07215K000. In accordance with the TOE, the purpose of an IBCT IN BN is "to close with and destroy enemy forces using fire, maneuver, and shock effect, or to repel his assault by fire and counterattack," which is identical to the other two types of infantry formations: Combined Arms Battalion (INF) (ABCT) 07315K000 and Infantry Battalion (SBCT) 07195K000.¹¹

Specific to IBCTs, published context is limited. In accordance with doctrine, the most important aspect of IBCT employment is terrain. FM 3-96, *Brigade Combat Team*, states that the IBCT is optimized "for the offense against conventional, hybrid, and irregular threats" in complex or severely restricted terrain, with complex terrain defined as "a geographical area consisting of an urban center larger than a village and/or of two or more types of restrictive terrain or environmental conditions occupying the same space."¹² Complex and severely restricted terrain is the IBCT's niche. The FM continues that an IBCT can conduct "entry operations by ground, airland, air assault, or amphibious assault into austere areas of operations with little or no advanced notice."¹³ This last statement is deceptive. While portions of an IBCT may be able to air assault, the BCT itself is unable to air assault because its structure cannot support it. The IBCT is not designed to do all of what doctrine states it can do. Some aspects, like an IBCT air assault, are aspirational at best due to an IBCT's equipment array and aircraft limitations. Someone preparing to lead an IBCT IN BN without previous experience could very well be deceived by the formation's capabilities—much like the vignette

introduced earlier. The context of an IBCT's employment is ill-defined and leaves room for improvement.

Mission-essential tasks are broadly understood as the common training readiness frame of reference. However, METs are usually trained at home station in isolation, with limited interaction with pre- or post-mission tactical influences or the demands of adjacent units. Experience offers that, counterintuitively, a formation's home-station METL assessment does

close combat. Transitions require synchronization of consolidation, reorganization, preservation of remaining combat power, reconstitution of spent combat power, planning, and preparation, all while within a nonpermissive environment and likely still in contact.

- Subscribe to, control, and structure signal networks: Effective command is founded on a well-structured signal plan. A well-structured

“Experience offers that, counterintuitively, a formation's home-station METL assessment does not always correlate to the quality of unit overall action in a training rotation.”

not always correlate to the quality of unit overall action in a training rotation. What does matter, however, is how much a formation is prepared for the underlying requirements that tie METs together. For example, a BCT that can stage, move, and occupy an attack position is far more likely to be successful in the aggregate. Fundamentals are the things that the echelon headquarters node (commander and staff) must direct, that only it can direct, to set favorable conditions for subordinate formations. Subsequently, identifying the right echelon fundamentals is important to understanding a formation's theory of employment. The METs matter, but fundamentals matter more.

The following subjective list of IBCT IN BN fundamentals might serve as a starting point for subordinate units to work through.

- Stage, move, and occupy: “Uncoiling” can be a complex operation. In order for a formation to fight well, it must first transport itself to the fight and establish its line of departure. This is often impeded by a battalion's inability to task-organize appropriately into smaller elements capable of moving themselves into an area of operations.
- Transition between METs: While we assess METs in a binary way, the reality is that one necessitates another, and the specific timing of these transitions is not always predictable. The ability to anticipate a transition, then drive the formation from one MET to the next is vital to a BN's endurance in

signal plan requires an understanding of networks and the ability to control them over lower tactical internet, subscribe to them over upper tactical internet, and structure services within digital platforms.

- Fight an organizational load: An IN BN is quantifiable in cubic footage and weight, and this load must be organically carried, or assistance must be requested well in advance. An understanding of occupied versus transient haul capacity and the mechanics of echeloning this haul capacity forward allows formations to transition and endure more effectively.
- Identify enemy disposition, enemy composition, and terrain: BCT reconnaissance activities create an enemy sight picture one magnitude too high to effectively drive IN BN operations. Employment of organic reconnaissance assets, driven by an information collect plan, is necessary to understand enemy disposition and composition and key terrain relevant to the enemy's destruction. Deliberate attacks (operations undertaken with a more complete enemy picture) are inherently more successful than movements to contact.
- Shape with organic close supporting fires: Infantry BNs complete the destruction of the enemy with direct fire. “The effective employment of indirect fires creates the physical and psychological conditions that if closely synchronized with maneuver

enables destruction.”¹⁴ Mortars may be the only indirect fire asset available to an IN BN commander. An understanding of desired effects and of what can be achieved with a mortar basic load enables success on the objective. For example, a 120 mm high-explosive basic load only provides two quality suppression missions. Anything more requires elegant ammunition management or requests for additional support.

- Triage soldiers, equipment, and supply: Operationalizing the concept of triage during execution allows subordinate units to win the current fight, preserve life and equipment, and reconstitute combat power. Triage is not something that can wait for the engagement to be over.
- Retain gains: A deliberate approach to organic security operations accommodates the retention of tactical gains and a transition between METs. Ubiquitous sensors on modern battlefields already make this harder and underscore the importance of recurring attention here.
- Conduct passages of lines in and out of contact: Any scenario in which a higher echelon is massing combat power or transitioning formations demands interaction between adjacent units. Preparing for a passage of lines is likely an implied task in every operation.
- Support BCT enablers postured within the BN’s area of operations: There are inherent responsibilities between landowners and tenants that do not share directed command or support relationships. These responsibilities are derived from an understanding of area of operation ownership and the supported-supporting requirements within that area of operations. In an IBCT, a 105 mm position area for artillery likely resides within an IN BN area of operations. Effective terrain management with unit boundaries is permissive, not restrictive, and enhances BCT survivability.

Structure of employment. Mission-essential task combat expectations include attacking, defending, moving to contact, securing areas, and air assaulting as part of an IBCT. Notwithstanding ongoing Army structure decisions and reorganization around Army 2030, the TOE provides the clearest understanding of the Army’s structural expectations. A commander is provided a specific quantity of soldiers across

paygrade and specialty, and equipment. This equates to a known cubic footage, weight, and consumption rate. Specific to an IBCT IN BN TOE, this includes a lack of mobility for its nine rifle platoons, along with a motorized heavy weapons company and large quantity of armored support and command vehicles. Load is a necessary consideration. For example, a rifle company’s organic hauling capability, a Medium Tactical Vehicle, is unable to carry all the equipment the TOE expects the company to have on hand for combat, let alone with an added basic load of commodity. A battalion commonly solves this problem by adding a carried Tricon container to its distribution platoon for rifle company equipment. Additionally, many rifle companies are currently in possession of a twenty-foot-equivalent military van of non-TOE subterranean gear. The unintended consequence of this discrepancy in capacity versus requirement is that the battalion gives up more than a third of its distribution platoon space to move equipment. Distribution platoon manning adds to this problem set for it lacks excess. There is precisely one driver and one vehicle commander for each of its seven trucks. One nondeployable soldier reduces the battalions haul capacity by about 15 percent. With this in mind, a battalion can realistically rely on less than half of its haul capacity to move commodity. It is this dichotomy of surplus versus famine that drives a unique perspective on employment. The battalion is not light enough to be truly unshackled of organic vehicular requirements and not heavy enough to move itself, protect itself in the fight, and endure with the necessary mix of commodity.

Although billed in doctrine as a formation designed to operate in severely restricted terrain, the triage and endurance of the battalion is reliant on access to ground lines of communication up to the front line of troops. Any intention of separating dismounted soldiers from their vehicle-based trains (and water) incurs risk to the force and mission that must be accounted for. Additionally, the battalion’s organic indirect fire systems are dismounted and require static positioning to be responsive. In light of these unique structural dynamics, the ideal geometry of an IBCT IN BN fight is defined by the effective range of its static indirect fire systems and a ground line of communication to each line company and to the brigade trains.



Staff Sgt. Jared Smith (left), fires noncommissioned officer of Iron Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment (3/2CR), provides 1st Lt. Pace Murray, platoon leader of 3rd Platoon, Iron Troop, 3/2CR, with the fires plan prior to upload 9 August 2018 at Vaziani Airfield, Georgia. Air assaulting directly onto an objective comes with obvious assumed risks. Suppression fires during the mission required precise timing and accuracy to ensure the effective employment of available weapons: 155 mm rounds from a M777 howitzer and 30 mm rounds and 2.75-inch rockets from two AH-64 Apache attack helicopters. (Photo by 1st Lt. Ellen C. Brabo, U.S. Army)

Method of employment. A formation's operational narrative is an attempt to understand its true nature. It is similar to a commander's "how we fight" document and is a consensus-building tool. Looking only at the IBCT's structure, one would expect the formation to be considered up-armored. One might also think that the IBCT is designed to fight off-grid; with an understanding only of purpose, one would think that an IBCT has the speed and firepower to "shock" any type of enemy formation. In isolation, none of these perspectives are true. However, overlap of all three perspectives does provide clarity.

Furthering the narrative, an IBCT IN BN in LSCO fights as a collective battalion; it is designed to employ its companies in mutual support to each other. There is only one main effort at a time, whether it is a rifle company, weapons company, or company team.

Everything is done to ensure the success of the main effort. The battalion owns its role in the close fight as the primary synchronizer, condition setter, and terrain manager for company actions. The battalion headquarters assigns purpose and priority of resources to subordinate formations, incorporates inorganic enablers, synchronizes through command posts, identifies enemy disposition/composition and advantageous terrain through reconnaissance activities, enables maneuver by suppressing and fixing the enemy with organic direct and indirect fires, provides medical triage to maintain combat power, and manages endurance with combat and field trains. The battalion fights the main effort to the decisive point, in theory, with the requisite combat power to succeed.

The battalion subsequently owns responsibility to transition the formation from one MET to the next.

This includes the retention of gains made in the previous mission; security of the formation as it consolidates, reorganizes, and regenerates combat power; and the planning and preparation for the next mission. As one of the IBCT's IN BNs, everything done is to support the success of the BCT. An IBCT IN BN is terrain oriented. Terrain provides the only widely available protection. Even when enemy focused, an IBCT IN BN keeps close watch on defensible terrain. An attack begins and ends in a defense. An IN BN attacks to destroy enemy formations, but it must seize key, defensible terrain in close order. If not attacking, then it is defending. Battle space is defined by the effective range of the 120 mm mortars. Rarely should a battalion operation occur outside two-thirds of the maximum effective range of its organic indirect fire capability.

By way of observation, in restricted or severely restricted terrain, an IBCT commander can employ the entire capacity of an IN BN offensively once over a seventy-two-hour period with small adjustment decisions every twenty-four hours. It takes about this long to effectively plan, prepare, execute, and reorganize from a MET. It can be done on a tighter timeline but will cost reorganization, planning, and preparation depth. A rifle company can fully exert itself well for eight hours a day. This equates to an eight kilometer movement under load, four kilometers of a movement to contact cross terrain, or two kilometers of movement to contact followed by a deliberate attack. To defend, it takes approximately forty-eight hours for an IN BN to plan, prepare, and effectively posture. Within the ebb and flow of combat activity, an IN BN's full capacity is intentionally employed to accomplish a MET with an understanding that some portion of it will be irreversibly destroyed or incapacitated, and supply reduced. The timeliness in which a BN can assess its losses, reorganize, and request replacements affects its ability to transition into a follow-on MET and its ability to endure.

Ideally, this operational narrative gives truth to a formation's capability that may or may not be written in doctrine, and it helps identify connections that would normally be missed by only associating with METs. It is admittedly subjective, and there is no correct way to present an operational narrative. Nonetheless, it adds another layer of understanding and specificity to the formation. Finally, it is from this sequenced connection from theory through structure to method that one can build actionable techniques like in the obscuration example above.

Conclusion

Actionable techniques are critical to warfighting at all tactical echelons but especially brigades and battalions. Recognizing their importance to how the Army fights and acknowledging that the Army's current techniques are in serious need of remodeling are first steps in the right direction. The framework provided in this article is one way to stimulate that conversation. By aligning a formation's theory, structure, and method of employment, much needed precision can have immediate impact on the Army's warfighting skill. Certainly, there are other ways of initiating dialogue beyond ATPs. This includes reinvigorating the professional discourse in military journals. The Harding Project is already pursuing renewal of professional military journals and provides a useful backdrop for rigorous professional debate.¹⁵

However, doctrine writers must reassess the utility of the current slate of ATPs as the domain of techniques. A conceptual technique is really just another tactic. It is detail that is needed. A clearer distinction among theory, tactics, and techniques is necessary to advance the warfighting narrative. Centers of excellence have a pivotal role here—they can relook how they prepare brigade and battalion commanders for tactical command and consider adopting a Brigade Fight Course like that of the Maneuver Center of Excellence. Combat training centers are also uniquely postured to support technique development. Task force trainers are seasoned with LSCO sets and repetitions and can ably drive debate. Combat training center involvement is especially important to the refinement of techniques through practice.

Finally, the Army could go as far as to dictate "a way" so that leaders can baseline their perspective that might include mandating future commanders conduct combat training center ride-alongs as part of their precommand circuit. This would most quickly set the line of departure across all generations of officers from which the Army can then evolve techniques and eventually return them to the realm of standard operating procedures. Such steps might constitute a tactical recalibration. They would certainly go a long way in building tactical prowess more closely aligned with the chief of staff of the Army's warfighting focus. At a minimum, such steps would return techniques to their rightful place in our lexicon. ■

Notes

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4. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 5120.01B, *Joint Doctrine Development Process* (Washington, DC: Joint Staff, 2020), GL-7. The Army employs the joint, standardized definitions of tactics and techniques.
5. Ibid.
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10. Jamshid Gharajedaghi, *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity: A Platform for Designing Business Architecture* (New York: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2006). Detailed in chapter 5, the theory-structure-method sequence within the technique framework is inspired by Gharajedaghi's holistic thinking foundation (function-structure-process). Theory of employment describes function while method of employment describes process.
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